



# Indiana WIC

## VENDOR UPDATE

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## Check Stock Change Up

Recently, you may have noticed something different about our checks. The latest WIC checks have a new look. As of May 14, 2012, WIC checks will be printed with three major design changes. Make sure your cashiers and store staff are aware of the following

WIC check modifications:

1. WIC logo + headings in black ink.
2. Single check # in black ink only.
3. Back of check is blank.

Pictured below is a sample of the new check design.

Please note these changes should not affect how WIC checks are accepted or processed in your store.

The image shows a sample of a new WIC check from the Indiana State Department of Health. Red arrows and numbers 1, 2, and 3 point to specific changes: 1 points to the WIC logo and headings, 2 points to the single check number, and 3 points to the back of the check.

Indiana State Department of Health  
WIC Program

12624548 CHILD E TEST 01/01 80000872

WIC ID NO. NAME OF PARTICIPANT AG/CL

PAY TO THE ORDER OF ANY AUTHORIZED INDIANA WIC VENDOR ONLY FOR THESE ITEMS, SIZES, QUANTITIES ONLY

Payable Through United Community Bank Marietta, GA 64-1968 611

WIC USE ONLY

FIRST DAY TO USE APR 24, 2012

DATE USED

CASHIER INITIALS

LAST DAY TO USE MAY 21, 2012

VENDOR MUST DEPOSIT WITHIN 30 DAYS OF LAST DAY TO USE

ACTUAL \$ AMOUNT

VENDOR PLACE INDIANA WIC STAMP HERE

X PARTICIPANT/PROXY SIGN HERE ONLY AFTER PRICE IS ENTERED

QTY. DESCRIPTION (NO SUBSTITUTIONS ALLOWED)

006 DOLLARS OF FRUITS AND/OR VEGETABLES, FRESH OR FROZEN IF \$6.00 OR LESS EXACT PRICE MUST BE WRITTEN ON VOUCHER IF OVER \$6.00 CLIENT MUST PAY THE DIFFERENCE OR BUY LESS \*\*\*\*\*NEVER WRITE IN MORE THAN \$6.00\*\*\*\*\* XXX END OF ORDER XXXX

800008722 06119684 02503027

## CVV Revisions

The Indiana WIC Program began issuing Cash Value Vouchers (CVVs) for fruits and vegetables in October 2010. Since that date, there have been thousands of CVVs rejected for excess dollar amount.

In March 2012, we revised the wording on CVVs in an attempt to better communicate the correct

redemption procedure to participants and cashiers. CVVs are issued in three denominations, \$6.00, \$10.00 and \$15.00. See image (above) from the previous article for a sample of the new message.

Vendors will continue to see a mixture of the old check message and the new message

through the end of June 2012.

We plan to discontinue payment approval of CVVs rejected for excess dollar amount beginning **October 1, 2012**. Please take time to make sure all employees that handle WIC checks know how to properly ring up a CVV and write the correct amount on the check.

## Vendor Incentives for Participants?

The WIC Program is often asked about the use of store incentives. This is addressed in a memo from the Supplemental Food Programs Division-USDA dated March 27, 2012, as stated:

*“Section 246.12(h)(3)(iii) of the Federal WIC regulations requires vendors to offer Program participants the same*

*courtesies that are offered to non-WIC customers. Therefore, a WIC-authorized vendor may not treat WIC customers differently by offering incentive items that are not offered to non-WIC customers. This is a violation of Federal WIC regulations, thereby constituting a vendor violation.”*

WIC vendors may not offer incentive items solely to WIC participants or give them any form of preferential treatment.



## Stickers Equal Savings for ID Folders

Supplying participants with new ID folders has been a common (and costly) problem for WIC. Participants often wish to update information such as proxies or appointment dates, which in the past required providing a brand new folder.

In an effort to minimize the need for folder replacements, we are now issuing stickers

that can be placed on used ID folders. The stickers match up with the participant section and the calendar section on the exterior cover of the folder (see insert at left). So don't be surprised if you start seeing stickers!



Participant Information Sticker

ID# \_\_\_\_\_ Participant name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Agency / clinic code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (participant, parent or guardian): \_\_\_\_\_

Proxy #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Proxy #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Remember to bring this ID folder when picking up checks and when shopping for food. Only you or your proxies are allowed to receive or use checks.

(front) Participant Section Sticker

Date	Time	Purpose of visit		
		Check pick-up	Certification(WIC)	WIC checks
Jan				
Feb				
Mar				
Apr				
May				
Jun				
Jul				
Aug				
Sep				
Oct				
Nov				
Dec				

(back) Calendar Section Sticker

## Coupons, Club Cards & Specials

In contrast to vendor incentives, a WIC participant is entitled to use coupons and club cards, as well as receive special prices and offers just as the general public is allowed.

If the participant has a coupon for buy-one, get-one-free milk, the store will charge for one milk on the WIC voucher and the other milk will be free. So even though the check says,

“one gallon of milk,” the participant is allowed to use the coupon to get the other gallon.

A “cents off” coupon for an item on a WIC check is also honored. The price reflected on the check would be for the net amount of the transaction, which includes the coupon deduction. No change may be given.

Sometimes manufacturers promote their product by giving free extra ounces at the regular price. For example, if cheese normally packaged as eight ounces is temporarily packaged in a ten-ounce size for the same price, the ten-ounce package of cheese would be allowed and counted as eight ounces.



# Checking Your Cashiers:

## Ensuring Prompt Payment of WIC Checks



The good news is that over 99 percent of WIC checks get paid promptly. However, with roughly 400,000 WIC checks being redeemed each month in Indiana, the less than 1 percent that are rejected for payment is still a lot of checks.

There are several things you should be doing to make sure that you receive payment for the WIC checks used in your store. Cashier training is critical in preventing mistakes that can cause checks to get rejected for payment.

1. Cashiers should be trained to handle each check as a separate transaction. This will prevent checks being rejected for "excess dollar amount" when the price meant for one check is written on another check.
2. When taking a WIC check, group the items printed on the check together. Then scan items in the same order as they are printed on the check. This will help ensure all the items on the check are handled together.
3. Cashiers must always look at the usage dates on WIC checks and write in today's date. WIC checks taken outside of the usage dates won't be paid.
4. Cashiers have to get a signature on the WIC check. Checks deposited without a signature won't be paid.
5. Cashiers must be strict about allowing only the correct WIC foods. If the wrong items are allowed, the check may be rejected for "excess dollar amount." A good example is when the check says concentrate infant formula but powder formula is brought to the checkout. Powder is much more expensive per can. If your cashier allows the powder formula, the check will get rejected for "excess dollar amount" and won't be paid.
6. Don't allow WIC participants to get more than what is on the check. The items may be correct, but allowing too many can cause check rejection for "excess dollar amount."
7. Cashiers must print clearly when entering the dollar amount on the check. Print numbers only, don't add dollar signs or decimal points. Sloppy numbers or dollar signs can result in rejected payment when they are misread.

*"Cashier training is critical in preventing mistakes that can cause checks to get rejected for payment."*

Your second line of defense should be the person who stamps each WIC check and prepares them for deposit. This person should briefly review each check to confirm the following:

1. Verify a WIC participant signature. If the check is not signed, call your local WIC contact person so they can try to get the participant back into the store to sign the check. If deposited without a signature, the check can't be paid.
2. On CVVs, a dollar amount limit is printed on the check. Verify that the amount written on the check is not more than the amount printed on the check. If the written amount is higher, correct it by drawing a line through it and writing in the printed amount next to it.
3. Look at the dollar amount written on the check. Make sure it is legible and reasonable for the foods on the check. Correct if necessary.
4. Educate cashiers when mistakes are found.

*"Your second line of defense should be the person who stamps each WIC check and prepares them for deposit."*





## 59-oz. Juice is Not Allowed

Lately there have been concerns and inquiries over the increasing amount of refrigerated paper juice cartons being sold in 59-ounce containers. However, the Indiana WIC food card clearly states that juice must be **64 ounce only, shelf stable or refrigerated, any container.**

Some brands of refrigerated juice (including most store brands) are still packaged in 64-ounce cartons. Only the 64-ounce size is allowed and we currently have no plans to change. This is consistent with recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The following information is taken from a letter from the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)

Supplemental Food Programs Division:



"Although juices meet the minimum requirements, the container size (59-oz.) does not allow a participant to receive the full maximum monthly allowance of juice authorized by Federal WIC regulations. We do allow some discretion for state agencies to authorize product sizes

Only 64-oz., shelf stable or refrigerated juices (any container) are WIC authorized.

that provide less than the maximum allowance provided that the nutritional integrity of the food package is not compromised. Authorizing a 59-ounce container of juice would compromise the nutritional integrity of the food package. For example, the maximum allowance of juice in the children's food packages is 128 fluid ounces."

Indiana WIC strives to work within the boundaries of the USDA Regulations and provide as much nutritional food as possible.



## About the WIC Program

The WIC Program was first established by Congress in 1966 and was operating in Indiana by 1974. United States Department of Agriculture funds go to the Indiana State Department of Health, where grants are made to local WIC agencies for running WIC clinics in your area.

WIC serves pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age five. Participants must be at or below 185 percent of the poverty level and have at least one nutritional/medical risk factor to qualify.

The WIC Program provides nutrition education and counseling, health/social referrals and specific nutritious foods. Program participants receive nutritious foods from grocery stores and

pharmacies authorized to redeem WIC checks throughout Indiana.

WIC supports the well-being of participants by:

- Improving pregnancy outcomes.
- Reducing infant mortality.
- Encouraging breastfeeding.
- Improving nutrition.
- Working with health & social services in your community.

WIC services are intended to provide babies with a healthy start to their lives.

Your business plays an important part in improving access to nutritious foods in your community. We depend on you to provide women, infants and children with the right foods in the right amounts. By ensuring WIC participants receive the foods prescribed by their local WIC clinic, you are contributing to a healthier community.

*Thank you for your efforts and keep up the good work!*







# New Infant Food Additions



Beech Nut is the only brand of infant food that Indiana WIC participants may get with their WIC checks. The list below shows the food products that are approved. The two highlighted products, prunes and ham, are new items that are authorized. Remember, only Stage 2 fruit and vegetable food products are approved for participants. If other foods such as macaroni, yogurt or meat are added, they can't get it.

Stage 2 Fruits and Vegetables (4oz jar)		Unit GTIN
Homestyle Motts Applesauce		0 52200 00502 6
Homestyle Chiquita Bananas		0 52200 00507 1
Homestyle Green Giant Squash		0 52200 00712 9
Homestyle Green Giant Sweet Carrots		0 52200 00714 3
Homestyle Green Giant Green Beans		0 52200 00715 0
Homestyle Pears		0 52200 00705 1
Homestyle Peaches		0 52200 00706 8
	<b>Homestyle Prunes NEW</b>	<b>0 52200 00503 3</b>
	Homestyle Green Giant Sweet Peas	0 52200 00716 7
	Homestyle Green Giant Sweet Potatoes	0 52200 00589 7
	Homestyle Apples & Bananas	0 52200 00514 9
	Homestyle Apples & Blueberries	0 52200 00549 1
	Homestyle Motts Apples & Cherries	0 52200 00501 9
	Homestyle Motts Apples, Mango & Kiwi	0 52200 00506 4
	Apples, Pears and Bananas	0 52200 00570 5
	Homestyle Apricots with Pears & Apples	0 52200 00505 7
	Homestyle Chiquita Bananas & Strawberries	0 52200 00513 2
	Homestyle Corn and Sweet Potatoes	0 52200 00276 7
	Homestyle Green Giant Garden Vegetables	0 52200 00826 3
	Homestyle Green Giant Mixed Vegetables	0 52200 00827 0
	Homestyle Pears and Pineapples	0 52200 00811 9
	Homestyle Pears and Raspberries	0 52200 00511 8
	Homestyle Sweet Potatoes & Apples	0 52200 00566 8

Stage 1 Meats (2.5oz jar)		Unit GTIN
Homestyle Beef & Beef Broth		0 52200 00797 6
Homestyle Chicken & Chicken Broth		0 52200 00795 2
Homestyle Turkey & Turkey Broth		0 52200 00792 1
	<b>Homestyle Ham &amp; Ham Broth NEW</b>	<b>0 52200 00793 8</b>





## Interview with the Consultant: Navigating the **NEW** Vendor Applications



Efforts resulting from a need to simplify are causing quite a stir. Indiana WIC's new vendor applications have caught the attention of a nationally recognized contractor and are starting to inspire copycats. The man behind the design is our own Doug Cooper, WIC Vendor Consultant for ISDH, who agreed to share the highlights, great strides and inevitable glitches that come with creating an original approach to vendor applications.

### Q. What's different about this year's vendor applications?

**DC:** This is our first year using online applications and price lists in Excel format. Unlike the old Microsoft Word format, Excel incorporates built-in formulas and price calculations, allowing us to compare all of our stores to each other and alerting us to potential errors. In addition, after the applications are reviewed, they will likely be made accessible online (through SharePoint) for reference by local WIC agencies.

### Q. What inspired the changes in design and format?

**DC:** What we are trying to do is simplify the contracting process. When I first started, we received all vendor applications by paper. That's roughly 700 applications that had to be entered manually. Now, vendor information can simply be reviewed online, and the Excel formulas allow for instant price analysis. We want to

gather more information and use data in a more efficient way than in past years. I think it's working pretty well for our first attempt.

### Q. So this is a unique system?

**DC:** We are currently the only state in the central U.S. that uses an Excel spreadsheet, but other states are beginning to take notice. For example, Michigan still uses paper applications, but has outsourced a company to develop a system with built-in calculations similar to Indiana's. This saves time and could assist consultants in narrowing down stores for reauthorization. This is currently not an issue for Indiana, but could be useful in the future.

### Q. How will these changes affect vendors?

**DC:** The new format helps ensure more accurate completion of applications. More accurate applications result in better edits for our vendors. The Excel calculations also make it easier for us to "spot" high prices and instantly evaluate whether a store is within our peer group averages. We're leery on some of the prices we have been getting, so we will be going out and verifying prices as well.

### Q. Have you encountered any problems using Excel?

**DC:** This is the first time we have used Excel, so there will be some bugs. A couple of applications have come in looking really odd. The

Excel format has built-in units, such as dollar signs (\$) and ounces (oz.), so only numerical values need to be entered. When extra units are added on top of the built-in units, the numbers are skewed to higher values. However, we have found ways to spot these glitches and fix them. We will get these problems corrected on future forms.

### Q. How do potential new vendors apply?

**DC:** Vendors can apply for authorization online. Visit our website: [www.wic.in.gov](http://www.wic.in.gov), then click on the heading, "Vendor Information" to find the downloadable Vendor Application and Food Price List. Once these two forms have been downloaded and completed, they can be sent in to us for review.

### Q. Anything else vendors should know about the new applications?

**DC:** If vendors don't have an application by now, they need to contact their local WIC office or vendor consultant immediately. Vendors should currently be working on getting applications completed and submitted. We will be contacting stores shortly (in June) to make sure vendors have accessed the application. Remember, vendors must have a signed agreement on-file with their local agency before October 1 to continue as a WIC vendor.

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twitter 



Indiana WIC is excited to announce the creation of a twitter account. Follow us [www.twitter.com/indianawic](http://www.twitter.com/indianawic) for updates on issues relevant to the program.

**We Want Your  
Feedback!**

Share your questions,  
comments and ideas for the  
newsletter. Email:  
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